



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 5  
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD  
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

SEP 02 2003

E.I-275

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REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF:  
B-19J

September 3, 2003

Section of Environmental Analysis  
Surface Transportation Board  
1925 K Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20423

Re: Docket No. AB-55 (Sub-No. 638X), *CSX Transportation, Inc.-Abandonment Exemption*

Dear Sir or Madam:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the afore-mentioned document published in the Federal Register August 1, 2003. The purpose of this document was to notify relevant parties that a petition for exemption seeking authority to abandon a specific rail line in Knox County, Ohio as specified was filed with the Surface Transportation Board. Our comments in this letter are provided pursuant to NEPA, the Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA Implementing Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

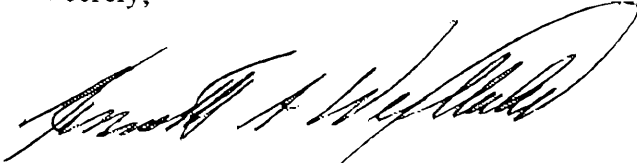
Pursuant to a review of this document, we understand CSX intends to salvage the line from the subject area. In particular, we feel this activity poses several questions that should be addressed with additional detail in the Environmental Assessment (EA) to be issued during September, 2003.

- Specific information pertaining to removal and salvage methods. In particular, applicable environmental regulations for removal and ultimate disposal of rails and ballast should be listed;
- The final disposition of crossties preserved with creosote. Per the July 3, 1984 Rebuttable Presumption Against Registration for three major wood preservatives under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, wood treated with creosote should be buried in a non-hazardous waste landfill unless otherwise required by the relevant State;
- Procedures for storing and fueling of construction equipment in upland areas, away from water bodies, floodplains or other sensitive habitat;
- Procedures for the prevention and/or control of spills (i.e., fuels, lubricants or other pollutants) from construction equipment; and
- Soil erosion and stormwater runoff mitigation practices to be utilized during abandonment activities. In particular, consideration of whether all or portions of the right-of-way that the railway owns will be revegetated with native flora should be addressed. Long-term benefits of this mitigation activity go beyond stormwater and soil protection to include development of habitat for wildlife and improved aesthetics.

Inclusion of the above information in the EA would satisfy routine questions from the EPA and facilitate a quicker review and approval process.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this issue. Please send one copy of the Environmental Assessment to me when it is filed. Should you have any questions, please contact me or Kathleen Kowal of my office at 312/353-5206.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kenneth A. Westlake". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Kenneth A. Westlake, Chief  
Environmental Planning and Evaluation Branch

cc: Natalie S. Rosenberg, Esq.